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ABSTRACT

This book examines the ways in which teachers' ideologies or belief systems about African American students interfere with the goals and aims of school restructuring. By following the progress of school restructuring in two junior high schools in a southern city fictitiously called Riverton, it explores the intersection of the failure of schools to educate students of color and school restructuring. At one school, upper-middle class white parents wielded most of the power, while at the other, an entrenched view of African American students as inferior had great impact on restructuring. Field work began in Riverton in 1988 and continued through 1991. Observations in both schools, school system and school documents, and interviews with students, teachers, and administrators provided data. The first chapter introduces the study. Chapter 2, "The Education of African Americans and School Restructuring," presents explanations for school performance and educational experiences of students of color, and explores the role of cultural and educational change in transforming schools. In Chapter 3, the historical and social context of the study is set through a description of the city of Riverton. Chapter 4 introduces the case studies with a typology of teacher ideologies regarding African American students. Chapters 5 and 6 describe and analyze how the teachers interpreted the restructuring. Chapter 5 focuses on ninth-grade teams, and Chapter 6 examines restructuring school-wide. In Chapter 7, the activities of one seventh- and one eighth-grade focus team at one school are compared with the other. Chapter 8, discusses the ways school culture, competing ideologies, and the school's and principal's position in district hierarchy influenced restructuring. Chapter 9 describes three exemplary teachers, and the concluding chapter examines assumptions regarding change in relation to the two schools. An appendix describes study methodology. (Contains 2 tables and 213 references.) (SLD)